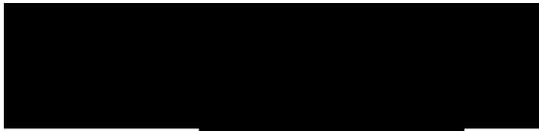




U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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prevent clearly unwarranted
invasion of personal privacy

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FILE: [Redacted]
MSC 02 183 62750

Office: HOUSTON

Date: **MAY 23 2008**

IN RE: Applicant: [Redacted]

APPLICATION: Application for Status as a Permanent Resident pursuant to Section 1104 of the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-553, 114 Stat. 2762 (2000), amended by Life Act Amendments, Pub. L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763 (2000).

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. The file has been returned to the National Benefits Center. If your appeal was sustained, or if the matter was remanded for further action, you will be contacted. If your appeal was dismissed, you no longer have a case pending before this office, and you are not entitled to file a motion to reopen or reconsider your case.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert P. Wiemann".

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The District Director, Houston, denied the application for permanent resident status under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act. The matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The director denied the application because the applicant failed to establish that he satisfied the basic citizenship skills requirement under section 1104(c)(2)(E) of the LIFE Act. The director provided the applicant two opportunities to pass the English literacy and/or the United States history and government tests. The applicant failed to pass the tests or submit relevant evidence as described in the regulations at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17.

On appeal, the applicant states that he has sacrificed time and reduced his income by 50% in order to further his knowledge of English. He asserts that he successfully completed an English Level 1 course at Houston Community College and that he intends to complete all subsequent levels of the English as a Second Language program. The applicant submits a certificate of completion for the course.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act (“Basic Citizenship Skills”), an applicant for permanent resident status must demonstrate that he or she:

- (I) meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1423(a)) (relating to minimal understanding of ordinary English and a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States); or
- (II) is satisfactorily pursuing a course of study (recognized by the Attorney General) to achieve such an understanding of English and such a knowledge and understanding of the history and government of the United States.

Under section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act, the Attorney General may waive all or part of the requirements for aliens who are at least 65 years of age or developmentally disabled.

The applicant, who is neither 65 years old nor developmentally disabled, does not qualify for either of the exceptions in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(ii) of the LIFE Act. Nor does he satisfy the “basic citizenship skills” requirement of section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(I) of the LIFE Act because he does not meet the requirements of section 312(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act). An applicant can demonstrate that he or she meets the requirements of section 312(a) of the Act by “[s]peaking and understanding English during the course of the interview for permanent resident status” and answering questions based on the subject matter of approved citizenship training materials, or [b]y passing a standardized section 312 test . . . by the Legalization Assistance Board with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) or the California State Department of Education with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS).” 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.3(b)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2).

In the alternative, an applicant can satisfy the basic citizenship skills requirement by demonstrating compliance with section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(II) of the LIFE Act. The citizenship skills requirement of the section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i)(II) is defined by regulation in 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3). As specified therein, an applicant for LIFE Legalization must establish that:

- (1) He or she has complied with the same requirements as those listed for naturalization applicants . . . ; or,
- (2) He or she has a high school diploma or general education development diploma (GED) . . . ; or,
- (3) He or she has attended, or is attending, a state recognized, accredited learning institution in the United States, and that institution certifies such attendance. The course of study at such learning institution must be for a period of one academic year (or the equivalent thereof according to the standards of the learning institution) and the curriculum must include at least 40 hours of instruction in English and United States history and government. . . .”

Both 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3) specify that applicants must submit evidence to show compliance with the basic citizenship skills requirement “either at the time of filing Form I-485, subsequent to filing the application but prior to the interview, or at the time of the interview”

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b) states that:

An applicant who fails to pass the English literacy and/or the United States history and government tests at the time of the interview, shall be afforded a second opportunity after 6 months (or earlier at the request of the applicant) to pass the tests or submit evidence as described in paragraphs (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this section [8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(a)(3)]. The second interview shall be conducted prior to the denial of the application for permanent residence and may be based solely on the failure to pass the basic citizenship skills requirements.

The record reflects that, pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(b), the applicant was interviewed twice in connection with his LIFE Act application, on March 12, 2004, and September 30, 2005.

On October 3, 2005, the district director issued a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID), stating that the applicant was unable to demonstrate his understanding of English on both dates. In response to the NOID, the applicant asserted that, despite the many difficulties it posed him, he registered for English courses at Houston Community College. He submitted a receipt and an enrollment form to show that he had enrolled in an English as a Second Language course that started on October 31, 2005.

On November 28, 2005, the director denied the application, stating that the applicant's response to the NOID had been received, but that the information provided did not provide sufficient evidence to rebut the NOID.

On appeal, the applicant states that he has sacrificed time and reduced his income by 50% in order to further his knowledge of English. He asserts that he successfully completed an English Level 1 course at Houston Community College and that he intends to complete all subsequent levels of the English as a Second Language program. The applicant submits the certificate of completion for the course.

The applicant has not satisfied the alternative of the basic citizenship skills requirement set forth in section 1104(c)(2)(E)(i) of the LIFE Act. Counsel asserts that the applicant qualifies for the language and civics requirement exception under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(3). To support his assertion, counsel cites the first sentence of that regulation: “[h]e or she has attended, or is attending, a state recognized, accredited learning institution in the United States, and that institution certifies such attendance.” Counsel, however, fails to cite the rest of the regulation: “[t]he course of study at such learning institution *must be for a period of one academic year* (or the equivalent thereof according to the standards of the learning institution) *and the curriculum must include at least 40 hours of instruction* in English and United States history and government.”

The applicant submits a Certificate of Completion from Houston Community College, showing that, on December 13, 2005, he completed a single course called ESL 1. This falls short of the requirement under 8 C.F.R. § 245a.17(3). The applicant does not assert, nor does he submit, documentation to establish that the course he completed lasted for a period of one academic year and that the curriculum for the course included at least 40 hours of instruction in English and U.S. history and government. The documentation submitted only showed a course that met for approximately six weeks (from October 31, 2005, to December 15, 2005), not a year-long course. In addition, the documentation submitted did not specify how many hours of relevant study the course included. The applicant's effort to satisfy the requirements, while commendable, is not sufficient. Accordingly, the director's decision that the applicant is ineligible for adjustment to permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act will be affirmed.

An applicant for permanent resident status under section 1104 of the LIFE Act has the burden to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that he or she has resided in the United States for the requisite periods, is admissible to the United States and is otherwise eligible for adjustment of status under this section. The applicant has failed to meet this burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. This decision constitutes a final notice of ineligibility.